waters, *i.e.*, upto 12 nautical miles from the coastline, within which State laws and regulations apply.

It has been decided to entrust guarding of coastline to the Coast Guard with immediate effect. The Indian Navy will provide the necessary backup support to the Coast Guard for this purpose. The Ministry of Shipping would provide all logistical assistance that may be required to the Coast Guard and the Navy.

Allotment of Defence land to private mobile operators

1747. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government allotted private mobile operators to erect towers at the Defence land; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) With a view to improve the coverage and quality of the communication services in the Cantonment areas, policy guidelines relating to provision of Defence land to Communication Operators to construct Shared Communication Towers and other Infrastructure to extend Communication Network to Cantonments have been issued by the Ministry of Defence. It has been decided that the Public Sector and Independent Infrastructure Providers (IP-I), who have been granted licence by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to build, operate and maintain various services, such as Unified Access Services, Basic Services and Cellular Mobile Services, *etc.*, may be considered for allotment of Defence land on lease hold basis, to lay the Optical Fibre Cables and set up/construct shared communication towers on Defence land at cantonment areas on certain terms and conditions.

Effect of declining underground water on earthquakes

1748. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that underground water in the country is declining putting many areas prone to earthquakes;

(b) if so, the areas identified so far; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to warn the people in those areas, in advance?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) Geological Survey of India (GSI) has received reports of ground fissures/cracks that have developed over parts of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand in the recent past mainly due to fluctuation in the ground water table. Further, these events were not considered to be associated with earthquakes as the seismic networks of the Indo-Gangetic plains did not record any earthquake during the reported time of their occurrence More over, no relationship has been established between the declining underground water table and the occurrence of earthquakes.